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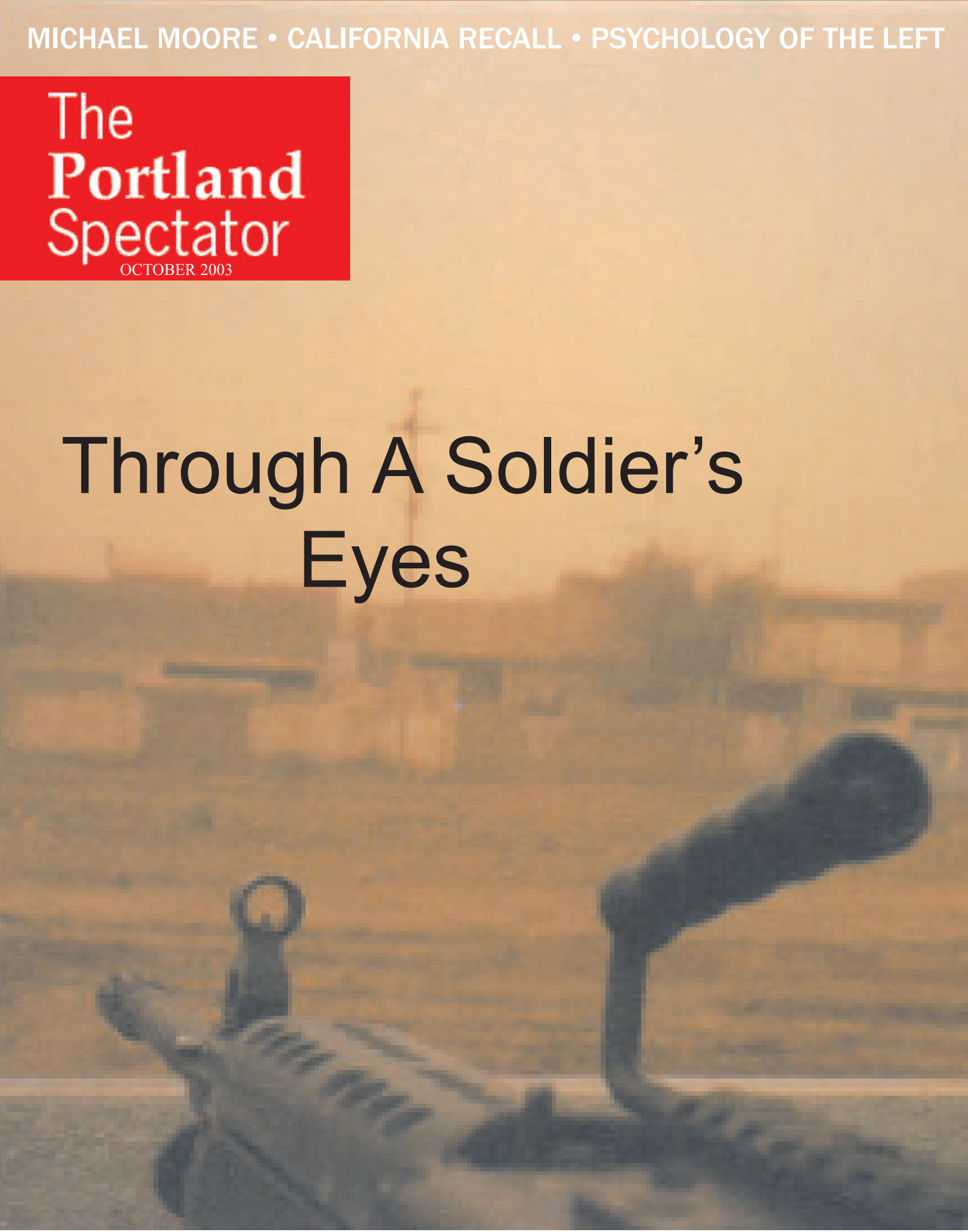
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MICHAEL MOORE • CALIFORNIA RECALL • PSYCHOLOGY OF THE LEFT

The
**Portland
Spectator**
OCTOBER 2003

Through A Soldier's Eyes



MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Portland Spectator is to provide the students, faculty, and staff with the alternative viewpoint to the left-wing mentality forced upon all at Portland State University. The Portland Spectator is concerned with the defense and advancement of the ideals under which our great Republic was founded. Our viewpoint originates from the following principles:

Individual Liberty

Limited Government

Free Market Economy and Free Trade

The Rule of Law

The Portland Spectator is published by the Portland State University Publication Board; and is staffed solely by volunteer editors and writers. The Portland Spectator is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations. Our aim is to show that a conservative philosophy is the proper way to approach issues of common concern. In general the staff of the Portland Spectator share beliefs in the following:

- We believe that the academic environment should become again an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent arguments to be heard. The current environment of political correctness, political fundamentalism and mob mentality stifle genuine political debate.
- We support high academic standards.
- We believe that each student should be judged solely on his/her merits.
- We oppose the special or preferential treatment of any one person or group.
- We believe in an open, fair and small student government.
- We believe that equal treatment yields inequality inherent in our human nature.
- We oppose unequal treatment in order to yield equality, for this violates any principle of justice that can maintain a free and civilized society.
- We oppose the welfare state that either benefits individuals, groups or corporations. The welfare state in the long run creates more poverty, dependency, social and economic decline.
- We believe in Capitalism, and that the sole role of government in economic matters is to provide the institutional arrangements that allow capitalism to flourish.
- We do not hate the rich; we do not idolize the poor.
- We believe in an activist U.S. foreign policy that seeks to promote and establish freedom, political and economic, all around the world.
- We believe, most importantly, in the necessity of patriotic duty consistent with the preservation and advancement of our Republic.

**The
Portland
Spectator**

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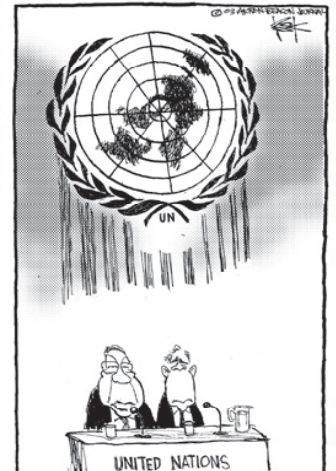
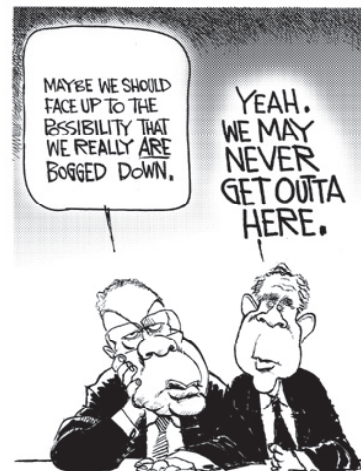


Taking him seriously is a pretty funny thing to do.

By
Justice
McPherson

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PARENTHESIS

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

More than 300 shops were recently shut down in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan by order of the governor. According to a senior police official the establishments were "corrupting the morals" of young people by allowing them to watch movies and play video games. Such activities, the officer explained, are "forbidden by Islam." The Governor of the province, Din Mohammed, is known to espouse similar interpretations of Islam as those which influenced the Taliban.

No More Thirsty Thursdays

The Mayor of a small town in southern Spain has declared that every man found walking the streets on Thursdays will be fined. He issued the curfew in an attempt to make men stay home and do chores. Many citizens are displeased with what they consider to be an obvious abuse of power. One man declared, "I'll go to a bar on Thursday and if they fine me I'll pay it ... but we'll be seeing each other in court."

No Hula in the Hoosegow

David Socha, a 17-year-old on his way to Hawaii, was arrested in a Boston airport and charged with a felony for having a note in his gym bag which read: "(Expletive) you. Stay the (expletive) out of my bag you (expletive) sucker. Have you found a (expletive) bomb yet? No, just clothes. Am I right? Yea, so (expletive) you." The kid was arrested for "making a terrorist threat." Journalist Vin Suprynowicz asks, "what has happened to our First Amendment rights? Young Mr. Socha's protected political statement was zipped inside his own luggage."

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Cuddling With Castro



It's become fashionable of late for celebrities to make high-profile pilgrimages to Cuba, to be wined and dined by Fidel Castro. In the time it takes to extol the virtues of universal health care and education, you can bet at least a dozen Cubans have risked their lives to get out. Iconic director Stephen Spielberg was the latest to make the trip. You'd think the man who so eloquently documented the brutality of totalitarianism in "Schindler's List" would know better than to cozy up to tyrants.

- Radley Balko, *FoxNews.com*, August 28 2003

NO MORAL CULPABILITY

Second, and most important, I'm white, and I haven't admitted that I was wrong, and I have no intention of doing so. I haven't admitted that I was wrong for owning slaves; I haven't admitted that I was wrong for supporting Jim Crow; I haven't admitted that I was wrong for not hiring blacks. I haven't admitted it because I've never done it, and until I personally do it, I won't take any blame for it.

It's true that some other people that happened to share a skin color with me have done so. What's my moral responsibility for this? Precisely the same moral responsibility as the moral responsibility of a law-abiding black man for the crimes committed by blacks. Precisely the same moral responsibility as my moral responsibility, as a Jew, for having caused or allowed the death of Jesus (hypothesize for a moment that Jesus's death was indeed caused or allowed by the Jews). Precisely the same moral responsibility as the moral responsibility of Japanese-Americans -- or for that matter, of Japanese who were two years old at the time of Pearl Harbor -- for the Rape of Nanking or any other Japanese atrocities. Which, of course, is to say absolutely zero.

-Eugene Volokh, *Volokh Conspiracy*, July 9, 2003

A RIGHT TO BE OUTRAGED

My Cato Institute colleagues David Salisbury and Casey Lartigue are amazed that it has somehow become fashionably liberal to argue that women should be allowed to choose whether or not to have an abortion while simultaneously claiming mothers should have no choice at all about where to send their kids to school. This is indeed quite remarkable. All parents would be rightly outraged if bureaucrats alone could choose where their kids could attend college. Yet those who define "public" schooling as synonymous with zero choice claim parents have no right to be outraged when arrogant bureaucrats insist their children be assigned to K-12 schools like branded cattle.

- Alan Reynolds, *TownHall.com*, September 18, 2003

WHY LET THE FOX WATCH THE

Do I believe Union Carbide paid a steep enough price for the 8,000 people who died due to the company's negligence in Bhopal, India? I do not. But at least the company isn't around anymore. If only the same could be said for misbehaving agencies of the state -- the same state that activists would charge with enforcing accountability on private corporations.

-Tim Cavanaugh, *Reason Magazine*, September, 2003

Double Ding

At the same time that a Multnomah County income tax increase was passed last spring, Beaverton School District residents voted to increase property taxes. Both were sold as a means of funding education. What Oregon politicians failed to recognize is that Multnomah County and Beaverton overlap. It is estimated that 337 people will be forced to pay twice for the same thing.

Renegade Lawman

Bandon, Oregon Police Chief Bob McBride was recently convicted on five counts of wildlife violations. He was found guilty of illegally hunting cougars using dogs, hunting fowl out of season, and failing to validate a bobcat record card. In his defense, the law enforcement official said, "If I knew that what I was doing was illegal there's no way in hell I would have done it." Perhaps the chief of law enforcement ought to touch up on his familiarity with the law.

The God That Didn't Grow

A substitute middle school teacher in Albany, Oregon told a little girl with a rare hair follicle disease that God would make her hair grow back. The teacher promised that if the hair did not grown by the next morning she would shave her own head. The hair didn't grow, and the teacher shaved off her hair. The girl's parents are suing the teacher and the school district for over \$2 million for intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Needlessly Squandered

A district committee for the Salem-Keizer School District found that it could reduce expenses by \$2 million a year by contracting with a private bus service company. Unfortunately, the school board renewed contracts with the more expensive company because the committee failed to notify them of the possible savings.

Campus Update

OSPIRG AT IT AGAIN

OSPIRG is still here, trying to get their money back this year. Last year, after having their funding seriously cut for not actually spending or using much of it on campus, OSPIRG began a campaign to get their money back. Why PSU was spending \$120,000 dollars on OSPIRG to pay people's salaries and open a chapter at OSU in the first place is a mystery. But this year, there are a bunch of posters all over campus letting you know that if you care about homeless people or the environment, you should support OSPIRG. Students should let OSPIRG know that they were serious last year. No one wants their money sent off campus to a bunch of kids doing nothing. Whatever OSPIRG does do on campus this year, can it be worth \$120,000?

LESS RAMEN MONEY

Within a few months students will most likely find that the tuition plateau is gone. And while a12 credit load is cheaper, everything else is more expensive. Who do we have to thank for all of this? State Democrats and their wily spending ways. Oregon has one of the worst economies in the nation. Thank you Oregon Health Plan.

HOPES FOR THE SENATE

The Student Senate is beginning a new year. Let's see if they can make it matter. Last year, it was a disorganized mess, with half of the year being invalidated by an E&CR committee ruling. Will this year be more of the same, or will the Senate actually serve a purpose? Our advice to the Senate: keep it *real*.



The Man In Black
1932-2003

From drug-abuse, murder, and prison, to love, religion, and redemption, Johnny Cash's music encompassed the entirety of gritty, authentic American life. His songs had a tendency to reflect the darker aspects of human existence — they told the stories of forgotten heroes, homeless alcoholics, destitute farmers, inmates, and bitter lovers. Cash had the remarkable ability to identify himself with sordid characters that mainstream performers would have rather overlooked. But beyond the grim realities portrayed in the music of 'The Man in Black,' Cash's stoic voice had a resonant message of hope.

Johnny Cash's musical talent became apparent at an early age, and due to the encouragement of his mother, the young Cash began a music career that would span the better part of the 20th Century. Haunted by the horrific death of his older brother, and unable to cope with the pressures of national fame, Cash became a notorious user of amphetamines, depressants, and hard liquor. At certain points, he no longer wanted to live. But the stubborn support of his second wife, June Carter, and his religious faith allowed Johnny to sober up and regain his will to live.

Throughout his life, the man was able to understand the beauty and the misery of the world that we live in. This wisdom was evident in Cash's music, and it will continue to affect us every time we hear his voice.

EDITORIAL

Collapse of the WTO Hurts Us All

Last month the World Trade Organization's fifth ministerial conference collapsed without resolving any serious issues on its agenda. While some hailed the collapse a victory, in reality the irreconcilable differences of the member countries will only help perpetuate poverty across the globe.

The most important issue facing the WTO was progress toward truly free agricultural trade policies. Currently, trade barriers such as tariffs on foreign exports and subsidies for domestic products have made it increasingly difficult for poor countries to compete in the world market. It is these developing nations that rely on the agricultural industry most, as nearly 2 billion of the world's most impoverished people live in rural farming communities.

Currently, access to the world market is blocked by the protectionist policies of Japan, the U.S. and the European Union. These countries pay over \$300 billion per year to subsidize their farmers, thereby suppressing the price of agricultural goods internationally. This is harmful to poor countries not only because it suppresses global prices but also because rich countries turn around and sell their artificially low priced goods in the poor farmers' local markets.

While rich countries insist that developing nations open their borders to foreign trade, they hypocritically attempt to protect their own farmers by imposing high tariffs on

foreign imports. This lack of free trade has devastating consequences. According to a report by the Center for a New Europe, "6,600 people die every day in the world because of the trading rules of the European Union." As Ronald Bailey of *Reason Magazine* points out, that is "like crashing a Boeing 747 filled with people every hour, 24 hours per day."

If the member countries of the WTO had been able to liberalize trade policies they could have increased world income by \$230 billion per year. According to the center for Global Development, movements toward freer trade could have lifted 200 million of the world's poor out of poverty. But because the developed countries refused to compromise, and because poor nations forced a collapse, millions of real people will continue to endure needless hardship.

Those who believe that the meeting's collapse helped poor countries are dead wrong. By allowing rich nations to continue subsidies, and encouraging poor nations to establish trade barriers, the world's consumers and producers will suffer. Unfortunately, those who most desperately need the

benefits of free trade most will be those most harmed by the failure of the WTO.



Spendaholics Need Accountability

When Ted Kulongoski began his run for Governor he stated in public speeches that taxes would not be raised under his leadership. As House Majority Leader Tim Knopp has pointed out, since being elected Kulongoski even stated on the Governor's website: "Government has to live within

its means. I'm not going to ask the Legislature, and I'm not going to ask the citizens of Oregon to raise taxes. We will make do with what we have." Strangely, this statement vanished from the website shortly after the Governor approved an \$800 million tax increase.

Due to a barrage of various tax increases, Oregonians have

become some of the most highly taxed citizens in the country. Instead of managing money responsibly, politicians rush to plug budget holes caused by their over spending by taking money out of the back pockets of ordinary citizens.

The governor's revised budget shows that legislators will have over \$11.03 billion to spend during the 2003-05 biennium. In other words, Oregon politicians will be spending \$10,500 per minute or \$175 per second for the next two years. That is a 143 percent spending increase from the 1989-91 budget of \$4.53 billion.

Oregon's Legislators must be held accountable for their inability to be fiscally responsible and spend within their means. How can we reduce government spending? As Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman advised in a Wall Street Journal editorial, we can control politicians "the way parents control spendthrift children, cutting their allowance."

Getting results that count.

Changing the strategy of student government. BY JUSTIN MYERS

Many student government organizations these days will describe themselves as "grassroots" organizations. It is a popular political aesthetic. A lot of moral legitimacy can be obtained by claiming to be a grassroots organization. The word seems to carry the mandate of the populace. A grassroots organization sounds like a great upwelling of activity cobbled together by the few dedicated citizens.

But in my experience, the term "grassroots organization" does not represent the true nature of student governments. Student governments are often institutionalized, fee funded organizations with paid employees. Such is exactly the case with the Associated Students of Portland State University. Here at PSU, our informal activist days are ending. ASPSU has grown into a utilitarian organization, but still the attitude and methodologies of the grassroots association persist.

Today, the methodologies that grew out of our grassroots beginnings (lobbying, petitioning, and most importantly, protest) are hurting us as a student body more than helping us. Student government has become such a massive undertaking that we will fail to meet our objectives if we continue to use passive and reactionary methods in our campaigns against administration proposals.

An example: This summer one of the major issues facing Oregon's student leaders was the removal of the tuition plateau. There were statewide hearings which were attended by student representatives from all of Oregon's public universities. The testimony given by students was earnest and moving, but failed to influence the Oregon University System Board away from approving the plateau removals. Even one of the student representatives on the board voted for it.

I believe that the efforts of the

students were ineffective in the tuition plateau issue because they offered no alternatives, and didn't appreciate the condition of the system as a whole. The methodology employed was to petition the administrators. To throw ourselves on their mercy, in a way. The scope of the debate was limited to the propos-

the terrain of possibility.

What I am working towards is a new cultural framework for our organizations. One with enough power and functionality to proactively guide our supporting institutions in ways we can feel good about.

My last example has to do with the most recent Student Fee Committee meeting, where a proposed two percent overhead assessment to be applied to student groups was discussed. Most of the students present strongly opposed the tax. At the end of the meeting, the chairperson said that it is our job to tell the administration that this tax is not acceptable, but also that it is not our job to give them alternatives. I fear that the result of this approach will be that the administration will have nothing new to work with, and will once again act as they have said they intend to.

Yes, researching coherent and powerful alternatives to our problems will take a lot of work. Yes, writing letters to the entire student body, and informing them of what is going on is a lot of work. Yes, it may feel like it is not our job to figure out a proper solution. Being proactive is difficult. But there are thousands of extremely talented political scientists, accountants, teachers, business people, engineers and pursuants of every field of knowledge here at Portland State University, and there are only a couple hundred who regularly work within the framework of student government and student activities. There is so much ability we can be taking advantage of. I believe that even the most difficult tasks can be completed by the students here at PSU, for our own sake, as well as the sake of the students who will attend this institution in future years. *g*



als in front of us. By being completely reactionary to these threatening proposals the student organizations failed to control the agenda or the vocabulary. We didn't even inform our own student body of the issue or our actions. It left us looking like frustrated and helpless students in front of our highly educated administrative officials who are having to cope with massive budget cuts. With nothing but our pleading to consider, they made the only choice available to them.

I believe that a different outcome was possible if students had been proactive in researching and planning and presenting alternatives for action. I maintain that officials in departments such as Administration and Finance are not unaware at the very beginning of how we are going to react to their proposals. Thus, our petitioning and lobbying is not presenting them with any new information to work with. We are not changing

Peaceful revolution and recalling politicians

Using democracy to hold our leaders accountable. BY JOEY COON AND KURT T. WEBER



John F. Kennedy once remarked, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." Think seriously about JFK's words as the recall effort against California Gov. Gray Davis continues.

Oregon voters passed an initiative 95 years ago that helps reduce the potential of a violent revolution. On June 1, 1908 Oregonians put into place what is now Article II, Section 18 of the state Constitution: "Every public officer in Oregon is subject...to recall by the electors of the state or the electoral district from which the public officer is elected."

Jim Puzzanghera at the San Jose Mercury News writes, "The first recall law in the country was a municipal measure enacted in Los Angeles in 1903 for local officials." In 1911 California followed Oregon's lead and became the second state to allow the recall of all public servants. The Initiative and Referendum Institute notes, as many as 5,000 recall elections for state and local officials have been held in the United States.

The California recall has its local detractors. A July 30 Salem Statesman Journal editorial decries, "Voters so distrust government that they willingly chip away at the representative democracy our enlightened Founders gave us." Actually, the recall is representative democracy in action.

Our Founders, who led an armed rebel-

lion against England's unresponsive rule, would agree. Thomas Jefferson himself asked, "What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance?" The recall epitomizes peaceful

resistance, one civil tool we have to hold public servants accountable to We the People.

The editorial continues, this distrust in government "threatens to destroy Americans' faith and support for their political system." We should look more closely at the causes of this distrust instead of focusing on a symptom.

According to an August Field Poll 70 percent of California voters disapproved of Davis's performance as governor. Even 49 percent of voters from his own political party were unsatisfied with him. Those numbers demonstrate little "faith" or "support" in the Davis-led government. The important question: Why?

Some California recall critics worry the process could be easily abused to depose officials for petty reasons. However, the process is not easy. Puzzanghera notes, "Although 18 states permit the recall of state officials, only one U.S. governor apparently has ever been thrown out of office because of it, North Dakota's Lynn J. Frazier in 1917."

The Associated Press reports the Honorable Barbara Roberts was the only Oregon governor, and one of the few in the U.S., to ever encounter a serious recall attempt. In 1992 the timber industry led such an effort, but the campaign fell a few thousand signatures short of initiating a recall election.

The Better Portland Alliance recently undertook a recall effort against Portland Mayor Vera Katz for "malfeasance in office and abuse of power," but did not succeed in getting sufficient signatures. State employee Timothy Dunn has initiated an Internet campaign to recall Gov. Kulongoski. Dunn states Oregonians were misled by Kulongoski, who repeatedly stated during his campaign and initial months in office he would not push for higher general taxes. In a May 27 speech he promised, "I'm not going to ask the Legislature, and I'm not going to ask the citizens of Oregon to raise taxes." Within three months, Kulongoski approved an \$800 million tax increase.

In 1983 recall petitions were circulated against Michigan's then-Gov. Jim Blanchard and numerous state legislators for increasing income taxes. Voters ousted State Senators David Serotkin and Phil Mastin from office. Michigan did not become the Mayhem State as a result; in fact, the Great Lake State remains peacefully in the Union to this very day.

The ability to recall public servants encourages them to be responsive to We the People. The recall is akin to a parliamentary "vote of no confidence," a common occurrence in England and other countries with similar governmental systems.

Corporate executives and CEOs of non-profits are fired everyday, not just every two or four years, for malfeasance and irresponsible leadership. Our public servants should be held just as accountable. Being elected to a term in office is a privilege granted by voters; voters should be able to revoke that privilege when they deem it necessary.

Oregonians need not fear the ability to recall politicians. To the contrary, we should view recalls for what they are: peaceful revolutions. *g*

Is the media biased? Yes. Deal with it.

Getting beyond the obvious and on with our lives. BY TRUXTON MEADOWS

I would probably rival Bill Gates, in the wealth department, if only I had a nickel for every time I hear someone whining about “media bias.” Conservatives cry foul over the print and television media. Liberals cry foul over talk radio. They both have a valid grievance. But the fact remains that it has always been this way—in one form or another—and will continue to be. Deal with it! Remember: life isn’t fair. Stop wasting precious energy trying to change something that cannot truly change. Instead, focus that energy on the avenues you have at your disposal to get your message out loud and clear.

We are in an age where virtually anybody with a pulse can broadcast their opinions, rants and general kookiness to a worldwide audience via the Internet. All points of view are represented. Information—and disinformation—is a simple search engine entry away. Some fear that there may actually be too much information available. In the big picture of things, it may be that the old standard sources of news and information may be less relevant today and becoming less important by the day.

Understanding that the print, radio and television media is, in fact, a business goes far to explain why there are biases. Advertising sales make up the lion’s share of income for the industry. Businesses that purchase advertisements have demographic targets. This is not to say that the media are entirely chained to serve these advertisers, but you can safely assume that it is a large factor in the decision making process of what stories to run or not. I do not find anything particularly wrong with this. However, it does require at least two things: A conscious effort to be fair and objective on the part of the media, and a personal responsibility to think critically on the

part of the media consumer.

Unfortunate as it is, the media itself bears much of the blame for the criticism it receives from the public. Eason Jordan, chief news executive at CNN, confessed to purposely not reporting many atrocities committed by the Hussein regime in Iraq for over a decade. In a New York Times op-ed piece (“The News We Kept To Ourselves”, April 11, 2003) Mr. Jordan explained that fear for the safety

activities were brought to national attention, but the damage remains. When it is found that a reporter for the paper of record can’t be trusted, how can the public trust any news source?

On top of all this we have to understand that reporters are human beings. They have beliefs and opinions like everyone else. Sure, they say they should and are capable of android-like open-mindedness, but they don’t always achieve it. So

a bias is natural when dealing with a story written by a human. So far, that’s the only kind that is available.

The main point is, however, that we shouldn’t get ourselves worked up over these biases. Acknowledge them. Learn to see them. Understand them. Then ignore them! There are plenty of ways to get your information and do your research. There are also many more opportunities to publish and broadcast your thoughts and opinions than ever before. Don’t waste time worrying about what bias others have. Use that

energy to get your voice heard. *g*



of his employees and fear of losing access to Iraq’s top officials were the reasons behind deciding not to report stories of what was really going on inside Iraq. This really was no “shocking” revelation. It was what many already knew was standard practice. It is common knowledge that many reporters protect their access to high sources by selective reporting. Yet it was a concrete reason to not trust the news.

The Jayson Blair incident was another self-inflicted gunshot wound, well placed in the credibility of the media. Following shortly on the heels of the confession of Eason Jordan, the New York Times had to turn their attention inward, as it became known that one of their own, Jayson Blair was guilty of fabricating facts and sources to embellish his stories. Blair subsequently resigned after his

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**News and
Commentary
Updated Daily**

From Prague to China

The danger of powerlessness. By Shahriyar Smith

The political differences between the United States and Europe are many. There are sharp contrasts between the way our systems are organized, the positions we take domestically and internationally, and the general attitudes of our people. When Europeans speak on a variety of issues, many Americans wonder if they are from the same planet. No doubt, Europeans wonder the same thing when they listen to Americans. On many issues, in almost every area, Europe and the United States are on opposing sides. It was not until I had the opportunity to travel to Prague this summer that I began to understand the nature of this difference.

During my stay in Prague, I had the opportunity to speak with many Czech students and workers, and even some Germans on vacation. On many occasions, when I informed someone I was an American, a political debate ensued. And these weren't stupid people. They made good arguments using sound reasoning. The fundamental difference between us was that we were operating from completely different sets of cultural and historical assumptions. Americans would never think to consider things that Europeans take as given, just as Europeans would never think to consider things that are central to the American view.

While American culture and history are, on a basic level, intimately linked with that of Europe, two completely different frames of mind have emerged. The American version is far more conservative, placing greater importance upon pragmatic considerations and accepting

an often bitter political realism; while the European view is more abstract and idealistic, owing much to the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. It seems that Edmund Burke, in writing against the French Revolution, not only managed to separate Britain from continental Europe, but America as well. For Europeans, the focus is on today, on the happiness and welfare of present society. As a result, the European frame of mind is often self-absorbed. For Americans, the focus is on tomorrow, on the happiness

and welfare of future generations. As a result, the happiness and welfare of present society is often neglected. When I asked some Czech students to speak on this issue, to explain the European frame of mind, their response was simple: "Look at our history. It is a history of war, of conflict, destruction. We are done fighting. Now we are ready for peace."

This illustrates the European view clearly. They are done with their history. They want to build now, to focus on their societies and ensure the happiness and welfare of their people. It is this mentality that justifies the existence of social programs in Europe that dwarf those

of the United States. In Europe, from healthcare to welfare, the scope and reach of social programs into the lives of individuals is far greater. The result is social apathy.

People in Europe know exactly what they will get tomorrow. They know exactly how much their government check will be, exactly how much their benefits will cover. There is no fear, no mystery of what tomorrow will bring. And so in Europe, people are not really living, they are waiting to die. This apathy pervades much of European society. And on a continent where everything is so close together, I felt saturated by it, and I couldn't wait to get home.

Just before I had arrived, the Czech Republic had voted to join the European Union. I did not understand why a nation that had spent 20 of the last 500 years under its own rule would surrender its economic sovereignty to Brussels and accept the many problems that come with the European Union. Even when considering the benefits of EU membership, it simply did not make sense. The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy is a serious threat to the continued viability of their economy. Their one-size-fits-all interest rate for the entire continent is too rigid. Their newly

drafted constitution is a poor document that only exacerbates the problems it originally set out to solve. And all of this combines with the fact that they

are joining an economy that is heavily dependent on social programs on a continent where the population rate is falling. This means that in the future, less people will be paying into a system

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that more people are receiving benefits from. Unless something is done soon, the European Union is a train wreck waiting to happen.

It was not until I spoke with the same group of Czech students that I finally understood why they decided to join the EU. There was a sense of inevitability in the Czech vote. The logic was that since they were a small economy surrounded by the EU, if they did not join, they would still have EU problems, but not EU benefits. In their view, they were going to have the problems anyway; the vote was really about whether or not they received the benefits. For this reason, even people who were skeptical of the EU ended up voting for accession. And in Europe of all places, a vote this pragmatic seemed, well, a little ironic.

I remember feeling that there was something fundamentally wrong with it. As Americans we take our self-determination for granted. But in Prague, they voted knowing they were floating in a current of affairs beyond their control. To Americans, these are unthinkable thoughts. Self-determination is a founding principle of our society. It is the primary reason we are a world leader today. Our position in the world is based upon the idea that our destiny is not chosen by others. In the future, there is a very real possibility that this may not be the case. Standing in Prague, pondering this possibility, I was uncomfortably reminded of China. As American power is balanced in the future by China, there will be drastic changes in the political landscape.

China's rise to power is alarming for several reasons. First is the magnitude of their growth. With four times as many people as the United States, the Chinese worker has to reach only a quarter of

the productivity of the American worker in order for China to have an economy just as large. China's recent economic growth due to privatization has been rapid and shows no signs of slowing down. With forecasted economic growth rates of 6 to 8 percent, China's growth in the future will be significant. This combined with the fact that China has increased its defense budget more than any other nation in the last 10 years, means that a larger economy will translate into a larger military.



Second is the nature of its government. As Gary Schmidt points out in the Weekly Standard, the authoritarian government led by the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army still rules by fiat, maintains an iron grip on the media, retains considerable control over the economy, and is extremely rigid about relinquishing any political control. Chinese imperialism is also something that frequently escapes the outrage of many decrying American 'imperialism.' Schmidt points out that "more than a third of China's territory is populated by non-Chinese. It's three largest provinces – Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang – are all home to non-Chinese civilizations...What's more, China openly expects to expand its rule to include ocean areas far beyond its coast and the strategically

central island of Taiwan... There should be no philological impediment to calling China what it is: a large empire with even larger imperial ambitions."

Last is the political culture of China. Chinese political culture is home to an insular paranoia where xenophobia, racism, and rich undercurrents of cultural hatred exist. China's political culture has a historical memory. Japan's rape of Nanking is not forgotten nor forgiven, neither is their conflict with Vietnam, their past with the British, or their feel-

ings over what they see as an American containment policy. The political, cultural, and economic realities of China, both now and in the future, are cause for serious concern.

According to Roger Robinson, chair of the US-China Economic Security Review

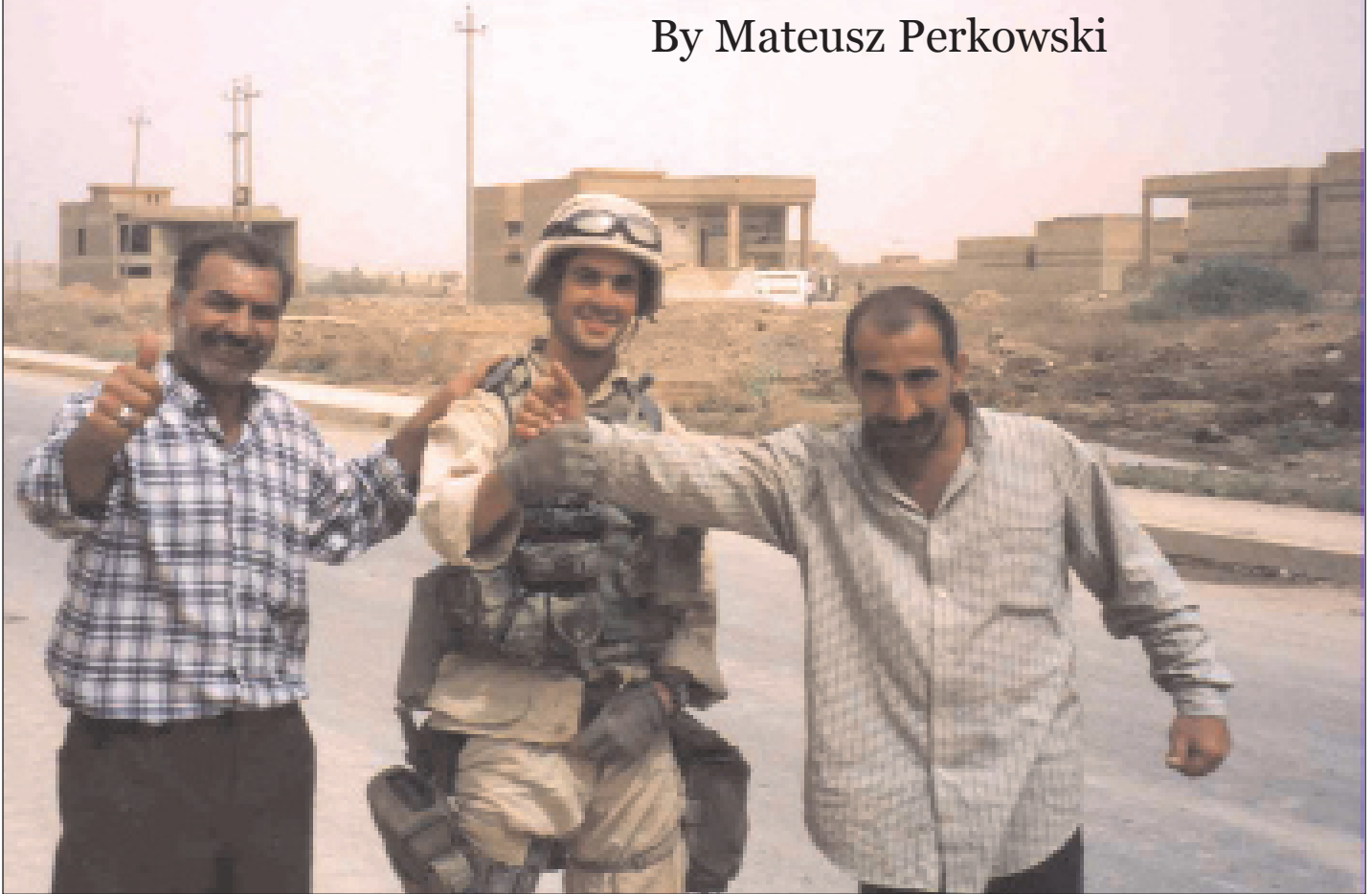
Commission, China is "the single greatest threat to American security" in the world today. China is a threat not only because of its rapid growth, the nature of its government, and its political culture, but because of its present strategic beliefs. According to Mr. Robinson, a situation may soon be possible where China is capable of a quick, high-tech strategic strike in the Taiwan straight while at the same time under the impression that the United States will not retaliate due to the cost of the overall conflict being too high. The idea is that as China becomes more powerful militarily, the cost of a conflict will be too great to bear on both sides over an issue as comparatively small as Taiwan. Aside from being

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Through A Soldier's Eyes

An interview with a U.S. Marine

By Mateusz Perkowski



When Michael Bacceliari and the other Marines in his unit found out that they were being deployed to fight in Iraq, it came as a rather obnoxious surprise for many of the soldiers. About half of them were close to finishing their contracts with the Marine Corps, and the deployment indefinitely prolonged their stint in the military by many long months. But while some of Mike's buddies were somewhat annoyed with the timing of the war, nobody was reluctant about going into battle. Their general attitude was that another war with Iraq was an unpleasant necessity. Not because of the threat of weapons of mass destruction, but because the first Gulf War had never really ended – Saddam Hussein's regime had never been completely defeated. As Mike put it, "We had to go in there and finish what George Sr. started."

Like most Marines, Mike adheres to the belief that duty supersedes personal comfort, and under all circumstances, one should follow through with one's duty. Political debate, which we are so accustomed to in the civilian world, is often viewed as inconsequential bickering in the military realm. And so when the Marines in Mike's unit embarked the U.S.S. Bonhomme Richard in mid-January, they did so without much concern

about the diplomatic conflicts within the United Nations or the uncertainty about Iraq's nuclear, biological, and chemical arsenal. In fact, the months of deliberation were irritating.

For most of us, the dispute over going to war with Iraq was an abstract disagreement, centered on opposing perspectives of the conflict. Before the war, the underlying problem seemed to be the United States' motives for invading Iraq: was the war going to be for liberation, or was it just an expansion of the U.S. empire? Does Iraq pose a legitimate threat to America, or are we just after its oil? These were important questions, but in the end, they did not truly affect our day-to-day existence. Regardless of what happened, we would still attend classes, go to work, come home, feed our pets, and wash our cars. But for Michael Bacceliari and the other soldiers preparing for combat, decisions made on the international arena would directly shape the course of their lives. As long as the debate persisted, the future was unclear. Long before he was deployed, Mike already sounded impatient. He didn't absorb himself in the political squabbling over the war, since it amounted to little more than incessant hesitation. "Either we're going over there to do what we have to do," he told me before the war, "or we're

not going to do anything at all. That's what it comes down to."

I have known Mike since the beginning of elementary school, and we have grown up in the same suburban neighborhood. He has always had an energetic, talkative personality, and has always been fond of perplexing folksy analogies. (Such as, "That boy is about as bright as a stick in the mud!") As a kid, Mike had a relentless fascination with anything that was sharp, explosive, or camouflage. Nobody in the neighborhood had a more elaborate collection of guns and knives than he did. For these reasons, I was not surprised that he joined the Marine Corps. He had no trouble completing boot camp, which so many people portray to be hell on earth, and to this day he seems relatively happy as a soldier. Mike has had the opportunity to travel extensively in the Middle East, and the military seems perfect for his manly, 'gung-ho' perspective on life. Every time he's in town, which is rarely, Mike drops by and fills me in on the adventures he has had on his various deployments.

From these stories, I knew that he had been under pressure and faced danger before. Yet I was understandably nervous when I heard that he was being sent over to Iraq. In the months preceding the war, many predicted a 'quagmire' worse than Vietnam – some even feared that an invasion of Iraq would detonate the Third World War. Though I was skeptical of these 'doomsday' predictions, the reality was that the war in Iraq was the most hazardous deployment in Mike's career – it was truly a life-or-death situation.

As it turned out, he was a lot less worried about the perils of war than I was. In the interview I recently conducted with him, Mike told me that the Marines were sick of delays. They wanted to finally go in and do what they had been trained to do. Although he admits that there was a certain amount of apprehension about facing people who were trying to

kill you, fear was not a prominent emotion among the soldiers. Whether you attribute this stoic mind-set to training, bravery, or thoughtless machismo, the courage of the Marines described by Mike seems genuine.

When he and his unit arrived in Kuwait, it was February and war seemed imminent. Mike and the other Marines from



Camp Coyote spent their days preparing to engage in combat. They performed patrols, rehearsed maneuvers in case of an ambush, and conducted "react-to-contact" drills that got them ready for unexpected firefights. Every battle scenario was planned for in advance. Basically, the soldiers wanted to anticipate and respond to the upcoming circumstances of real warfare. Finally, in late March, the Marines got word to move across the 'line of departure' (LOD) into Iraq. This signaled the beginning of the war. When I asked Mike what ran through his mind as he crossed into enemy territory, he told me that the sensation was hard to put into words. The intense adrenaline made it impossible to distinguish between alarm and eagerness, anxiety and the zeal for warfare. It was an experience that men have shared since the dawn of history: setting out for battle. Aside from the Marines' sense of duty and commitment to each other, Mike says, "We went in there looking for a fight."

But the battle was slow to arrive. The crew traveled north through Iraq for three days before encountering enemy fire. The way Mike tells it, it was almost anti-climactic. Even when they did finally get to fight, he told me, "it was just a few pop shots here and there." It wasn't until the soldiers got to the city of Al-Nasirya that they truly experienced the fervor of battle.

Unlike the battalions before them, Mike's group was aware of the impending danger awaiting them in Al-Nasirya. The First Battalion 2nd Marines and the Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion (LAR) had been ambushed by Iraqi soldiers pretending to surrender, only to fire upon U.S. troops at close distance. This was an unexpected turn of events. Coalition forces were expecting mass capitulation at the front – in one case, Iraqi soldiers surrendered to British troops before the war even started.

The Republican Guard and the Fedayeen fighters took an advantage of this presumption and ended up killing over 50 Americans in Al-Nasirya, according to Mike's estimates. Despite the ambush, U.S. troops were able to secure the bridges at the north and south ends of the town.

The U.S. strategy in the Iraq war was to bypass most of the smaller towns and cities in order to infiltrate the heart of Saddam's regime – Baghdad – as quickly as possible. But to do this, the military had to secure the 'main supply routes' (MSR) to allow convoys with ammunition and supplies to pass safely into the Iraqi capital. Al-Nasirya was located right on top of one of the central MSRs. The bridges had already been secured, and now the objective for Mike and the other soldiers in the Third Battalion 1st Marines was to gain command of the town itself.

It was completely dark when the team

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moved into attack. To prevent any more ambushes, the soldiers were instructed to engage in combat with any Iraqis they saw fit to fire at. Civilians had been warned days earlier to evacuate the town, and so Mike and the others in his unit had to assume that every Iraqi they encountered was an enemy.

Mike's weapons were of utmost importance to his survival. During the course of our interview, he went into meticulous detail describing the exact parameters of the equipment used: "We had night vision goggles, a night vision device, I had a night vision scope on my SAW – I carried a M249 Squad Automatic Weapon. It's a 5.56 millimeter, belt fed, gas operated, air cooled, fully automatic, shoulder-fired weapon. Actually, it's magazine or belt fed, either way, there's a drum that goes on it. We moved in on AAVs, amphibious assault vehicles – uh, basically, big ass aluminum beer cans."

The AAVs were not designed to withstand an assault from rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), leaving Mike and the others in the vehicle completely exposed as they entered Al-Nasirya. The Marines sprayed the rooftops and windows of the buildings with bullets, and began taking fire as soon as they crossed the southern bridge. Fortunately, RPGs have an arming distance, meaning that the grenade must first travel a certain distance before being able to explode. The streets of Al-Nasirya were so narrow and twisted that an RPG attack became unlikely to do any damage once they got inside the city, since the rocket propelled grenades could not have achieved the proper distance to arm themselves.

The troops spread themselves out along the main supply route and were fired at by AK-47s throughout the night. Luckily, the Iraqi night-vision capabilities were extremely limited; even if they had the equipment, it was of poor quality. It didn't take long for the Marines to gain dominance. The attack upon Al-Nasirya began at about 2 in the morning, and within a couple hours, the U.S. troops "turned the gauntlet into Dodge City," as Mike put it. As soon as the soldiers gained control of the buildings on either side of the supply route, they moved outwards, fighting throughout the town.

Al-Nasirya seemed to be pacified, but as soon as it was dawn, the Iraqis resumed their attack. "We hit resistance big time at daybreak, and that's when we started taking a lot more sniper fire and people were coming at us with AK-47s." Once the Marines had established enough of a foothold in the town, each company in the battalion began 'clearing houses.' The soldiers swept through the buildings, one by one, killing anybody who put up any resistance and then positioning themselves on the rooftops. "A house



that we cleared, there was four people in the basement. One guy, he had a bunch of phony paperwork on him saying he was a doctor from Al -Nasirya, but he actually turned out to be Baath Party. The other guys with him got killed – a lance corporal with us shot them. They turned out to be bodyguards. This guy, he got shot in the leg, so he was out of the fight, and we ended up getting a lot of information out of him. Whatever middle-man thing he was doing, it stopped right there."

By 10:30 in the morning, Iraqi resistance in Al-Nasirya was suppressed without costing the lives of any U.S. soldiers. The battalion occupied the town long enough for eight supply convoys to pass through, and in the mean time, the soldiers surveyed the destruction inflicted upon the town. Aside from the damage done to the buildings themselves, U.S. forces were pleased to find that all the Iraqi casualties were indeed enemy combatants – from what they could tell,

no civilians had been killed or injured.

With the convoys having passed through the town unmolested, Mike's unit kept moving north onto Baghdad, occasionally coming upon pockets of resistance. His recollection of these skirmishes is almost comical – the Iraqi opposition to the U.S. was so haphazard and scanty that "you would have to be certifiably suicidal to do what they were doing. They would come up like, 'We've five guys with AK-47's and we're gonna take out twelve hundred Marines!'

What are you thinking you fucking morons?"

By the time Mike got to Iraq's capital, the statues of Saddam were already falling and the regime had obviously collapsed. The soldiers were overwhelmed by the public's positive reaction. Aside from a few scuffles, Mike says, "I shook more hands in Baghdad than I actually shot bullets." Saddam's defeat was met with tremendous joy, which proves how domineering the former Iraqi dictator really was. Mike asked me, "What would you do if the United States Marine Corps kicked in your front door? I would be pissed. But you know they were oppressed when the Marine Corps kicked in their door, and they were

waiting on the other side with tea, saying, 'I'd be honored if you shot people from my roof.' They had a psychotic lust-hog as their leader. No shit they're oppressed."

Recent events in Iraq, however, seem to indicate that the pro-U.S. enthusiasm has subsided, to say the least. Amid reports of protests and bombings, the current atmosphere in Iraq seems far removed from the optimistic times when Mike and the other Marines made their through the crowds of jubilant onlookers in Baghdad. The question we now seem to be asking is: was it worth invading Iraq? After all, no substantial evidence of WMDs has been found, Saddam remains at large, U.S. soldiers continue to be killed, and the country seems to be nothing more than an enormous drain on the taxpayer's wallets. Perhaps most disturbing is the possibility that Iraq will become another fundamentalist Middle-

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Bush Bashing and the Economy

Democrats grossly misunderestimate W's strategy. BY ADAM WILKIE

The first quarter of 2001 was a dark time for many. For some it was the beginning of the end. Not only did every liberal's nightmare come true with George W. Bush taking office, our nation's economy officially entered the recession that began as Clinton was leaving office. As Democratic presidential hopefuls start getting into the full swing of Bush-bashing and begin spouting off as many one-liners as their speechwriters can come up with, the economy has become a hot topic. Despite some not knowing GDP from GOP, the Socialists, sorry, "Democrats" lash out at every opportunity. Fortunately for the right, the national economy is nowhere near as bad as they would have you believe.

With the national unemployment rate at 6.4 percent many question the success of the President's policy moves, most notably tax cuts. This environment has created a wonderful opportunity for several Democrats to offer a brilliant display of economic incompetence. Senator Dick Gephardt recently commented, "This is about as dismal and poor a performance in economics as I can remember in the history of this country". Apparently he never heard of the Depression or Jimmy Carter. Not to be outdone, NJ Sen. Jon Corzine has called the tax cut policies "an economic disaster". All of this launched at a President who took office almost an entire year after an economic boom blew up.

In the early 1990s, then Vice President Al Gore invented one of the greatest technological advances in history, the Internet. (Evil) Corporate spending surged throughout the decade as DotCom's popped up everywhere and governments spent like drunken sailors. No longer did you actually have to go down the pet food aisle at the grocery store. You could simply have dog biscuits shipped to you by UPS. In just a few years all major stock market indexes would shatter records and make many investors (brief) millionaires. A portion of this growth was fueled by corrupt Wall

Street analysts and fraudulent accounting; tech spending on the Y2K bug was the main catalyst. Unfortunately, the clock struck midnight.

Having watched the stock market build itself up to record-breaking levels on the concept of a "new economy", many investors accurately saw the economy for what it truly was: a house of cards ready to topple. It wasn't just a few inves-

Most would scoff at the suggestion that we haven't had tough times lately. I readily acknowledge things have been rough, but I quickly point out that the economy should be in far worse shape.

The first target for the armchair economist/politician is the stock market. I still cannot figure out how the stock market falling from a ridiculous level where it never should have been to a level based

on rational investment theory is in the slightest way a disaster. An unemployment rate of 6.4% isn't even close to a disaster; twelve years ago it was over 10% just from Alan Greenspan trying to control inflation. In fact, the average unemployment rate when Slick Willy was in office was 5.2%. How very ironic that unemployment in Oregon shoots well over 8% and Democrats remain silent on Kulongoski and Kitzhaber, but bash Bush.

I shed a tear as inflation is non-existent, interest rates are at all-time lows, and despite the current "economic disaster" even a

two-dollar hooker with a bankruptcy can get a mortgage. These are bad economic times indeed. Just after Pets.com went under and right before the decline of HomeGrocer.com many felt the coming economic downturn was going to be long and devastating. Fortunately, it hasn't been, although it seems a few Democrats want it to be. g



tors who saw bad times ahead, but slick Dick and Dubya himself. Months before they took office they were roundly criticized for (accurately) predicting a souring economy. How were they capable of such foresight in still relatively good times? The answer is easy; history has a tendency to repeat itself. In the 17th century Dutch tulips were all the rage. In the late 1920s investors snatched up stock in any company they could get their hands on, not knowing profitability from illiquidity. A similar scenario occurred during the 1980s in Japan. Not surprisingly, these economies suffered dramatically in the following years.

At the time of this writing there has been one stark difference between our recent stock market bubble and most of the previous bubbles in history: We have yet to see a major economic catastrophe.

Cognitive contradictions

A Psychological Analysis of the Left. AARON JOHN SHAVER

There are fundamental psychological differences between liberal and conservative thinking. It is important to understand the mental processes that separate these political positions. Socially disruptive political activism and overtly political university courses are some direct results of this cognitive dichotomy. What follows is a survey of the major deficiencies in leftist thought.

Political Fragmentation

The website indymedia.org offers a valuable window into the left's thinking. The left-as even many readers of the site will agree-succumbs to political impotence through its fragmentation. Infighting results in three major camps.

The first is that of the hardcore activists, those vigorously opposing such foes as multinational corporations. They're the Jeffery Luers of the world (an Oregonian caught and convicted of setting fire to three SUVs at Romania Chevrolet). Second, there are leftist politicians who the hardcore camp claims are "just as bad" as those to whom they're opposed (Republicans) since they support globalization and receive corporate funding. These two camps are ideological and numerical extremes.

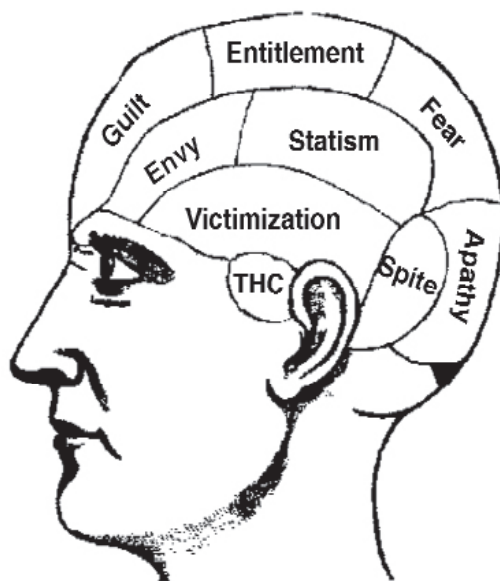
The final camp is the giant mass of urban and suburban, college-educated leftists. The hardcore activists characterize this third wing as being too ignorant of political corruption to be ideologically helpful, and too comfortably complacent to engage in hardcore activism. The third wing returns criticism in kind by claiming that the activists are too idealistic and don't support electable candidates.

The Protest Mentality

The protest mentality gives rise to a contradiction in leftist thinking: leftists claim to be against destruction and war, but keep a straight face when furthering their agendas with these same instruments. From "victimless" crimes like committing arson at a business to a constant undercurrent of violent revolution rhetoric, a fuller picture of the left fails to

align with a peace-loving image.

For instance, a poster to the indymedia.org forum writes, "Craig, do you ever actually do anything for the revolution (besides endlessly rewrite your graduate thesis)?" This is a prime example of interaction between the first and third leftist camps: the hard left bemoaning the inaction of the comfortable left (a



significant number of whom reside in academia). The poster later explained to Craig that the university doesn't teach guerilla warfare tactics, so he will be helpless when "the revolution" comes.

More dangerous than mere words, though, is a frightening example of hard left destruction coming from the Earth Liberation Front. That group is suspected in a fire which destroyed 206 condominium homes, causing over \$20 million in immediate damage. (Later costs will include the bill for 100 firefighters and 20 investigators, photographers, evidence technicians and engineers.) According to an August 2003 article in the San Diego Union-Tribune, "The group ... claims to have set dozens of fires in North America since 1997 that have resulted in nearly \$50 million in damage."

Helpless and Homeless

Examining homelessness sheds light on the self-imposed helplessness present in leftist thinking. The left simultaneously sympathizes with and exploits the plight of homeless people. The homeless services in Portland are (or were, according to some reformists) "relief-based" rather than encouraging self-responsibility. An article in the Portland Tribune

notes a 1998 report which said that the services "...by not requiring the youth to go to school, get a job or move into transitional or permanent housing, allowed minors to linger on the streets for years."

The fundamental difference here, between liberals and conservatives, is that liberals preach the "safety net" whereas conservatives stress self-reliance, accountability, and self-responsibility. What those on the left are afraid to admit is that there is a sizeable portion of the homeless "community" who choose to languish in that lifestyle. There are able-bodied adults who sit around downtown Portland begging for change rather than seeking employment.

Picky Populism

Leftists act as if they are populists. But, in fact, they're just as interested in protecting their own, specialized group as anyone. They differ in that they idolize the working class and other "oppressed" people. A discussion on indymedia.org about the proposed opening of a New Seasons market in southeast Portland helps to illustrate the point. People are crying, "Gentrification!" when even a minimally upscale business moves into a neighborhood. Yet, the real concern from the left isn't for the poor and "oppressed" (who don't live in the trendy part of southeast Portland), but instead for maintaining their own sense of rebelliousness against capitalism. In reality, businesses create new employment and wealth for workers at the store itself, farmers and manufacturers supplying the store, and businesses near the store as property values rise (not to mention shopping convenience for residents).

Comfortable leftists do little to support poor people. They stick to noisy but useless protests and rallies, slogans on clothing and backpacks, and frivolous interference with businesses and government (breaking store windows, graffiti, taunting police officers). While they're supposedly anti-racist, against sexism, and so forth, they will be the first to paint a picture of police officers, journalists, and soldiers with a broad brush. According to them: all police officers beat minorities, all journalists are "corporate whores," and all soldiers are intent on killing scores of "brown people" overseas.

The White Man's Burden

Besides an angry protest mentality and a coddling safety net for self-induced helplessness, the left has another skeleton in its psychological closet: white guilt.

Leftist academics and activists use "oppressed" people as objects to fuel their anti-conservative diatribes. In a stunning irony, those leftists who claim to be staunchly against exploitation exploit people themselves. Funding for departments of Black Studies, Women's Studies, Latino studies, and so forth, come from the pocketbooks of white people who have been made to feel guilty; they're made to think that they owe minorities. Even white people who have no ancestral ties to slavery, Columbus, and similar events are lumped into a generic category of "oppressor."

The Studies departments dwell on centuries-old injustices committed by a generalized white oppressor. Even seemingly unrelated disciplines like speech communication are affected by the white-bashing mindset. In a speech class I took, the professor apologized that the textbook was written by a white male. You can join me in puzzlement at what this had to do with the course.

In a June 2003 article, the Washington Post revealed the "privilege walk," which students at the University of Massachusetts could participate in while taking a course on "whiteness studies." In the exercise, students are supposed to walk forward if they answer affirmatively to questions that indicate "privilege," and walk backward if they answer in the negative. It's designed to illustrate how white people skate by in life, nary a care in the world, while non-whites are daily burdened with oppression from all

sides.

Never mind the vast swaths of poor white people, the unacknowledged working class who won't enjoy the "privilege"



of extra pigmentation in their skin which confers scholarships and other benefits. Never mind that even woefully underprivileged non-whites have access to a plethora of programs and social perks, from Head Start to Saturday Academy to affirmative action (you may have seen some of these less fortunate, non-white youths on the PSU campus during summer term). And, finally, never mind American ideals. Why muster up the effort required by a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" attitude, when you can complain about unfairness and receive handouts?

White guilt is a scapegoat, pure and simple. It's a way to participate in that most fashionable of recent American trends: evasion of responsibility. Was I or were my ancestors responsible for the vicious racism of the South, of slavery, of segregation? No, that's historically and geographically impossible. (I'm a third-generation American with a largely Irish ethnic background.) And yet, as during a "Psychology of Oppression and Empowerment" course I took—a course which, like the dubious Studies courses, had very little to do with psychology, or indeed any social science—I'm encouraged to feel as if somehow the suffering of minorities is my fault. Similarly, I also committed the crime of being heterosexual. And though I don't remember oppressing homosexual people in any

way, gosh, I sure must have. The guilt I am supposed to feel has got to be connected with some event, right?

The endless exploration of past events in which one was wronged, present feelings of insecurities and future uncertainties that brings a stale, sluggish lack of progress to the modern left. Whereas 1960's civil rights proponents could claim real progress and point out genuine injustices, modern leftist academics must resort to growling over scraps of unfairness. The generic white, heterosexual, male oppressor is sneaky, you see. He skulks around in the dark, masterminding subtle new ways to oppress his minority adversaries.

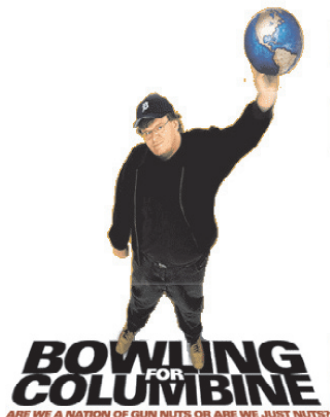
Hope for the Future

Conservative critics provide a much-needed check on the irresponsible behavior of the left. However, I foresee an even broader defense of Enlightenment values and self-responsibility from writers, politicians, and ordinary people endowed with a basic sense of critical thinking. Perhaps this return to modernism (and away from postmodernism) will be fueled largely by a more-informed mass of college students like me and others who share my revulsion for substance-free academics and activism. *g*

BOOKS & ARTS

Bowling for Columbine

LIES OF A STUPID WHITE MAN. REVIEWED BY JUSTICE MCPHERSON



Comedian Michael Moore seems to have made it big. Movies, books, and a show of his own mark the now wealthy comic with his carefully cultivated “ordinary guy” stage persona as a success in the entertainment world. His comic talents entertain millions. Unfortunately, the biggest joke of all seems to lie not in his comedic talents, but in his fans' credulity in believing his staged and invented facts as if they had some relation to reality.

Mock, Mock, Mock

Moore begins by recounting the Columbine shooters' morning bowling class – “Two boys went bowling at six in the morning.” - in spite of the fact that the police investigation early on had reported that they had skipped class that morning.

Viewed as “mockumentary,” in the style of the 1984 Rob Reiner creation *This is Spinal Tap*, this is acceptable. In '84, Reiner's film portrayed the history of the heavy metal band ‘Spinal Tap.’ Over the course of the movie, all but the most credulous come to the realization that the band never existed, as over the top absurdities in conflict with recorded history stack up. Still, a few people walked out of the movie thinking that the events in the movie were real.

More fallacies build up. Moore goes to a bank in Michigan, and buys a certificate of deposit. He is shown filling some papers out, and is presented with a gun as interest. City dwelling leftists chuckle at the bank's “folly.” But none see the months of preparation and arrange-

ments needed to get a gun in such a way, or the extensive checks that were done over that time.

Canada the Peaceful?

Moore happily quotes statistics in his movie to try to make violence in the US sound comparatively worse than the rest of the world. (This is, in a way, strangely contrasted by his citing of the statistic elsewhere in the movie that actual violence in the US had dropped significantly, while the incidences of such violence reported in the media rose by six times.) One of his most often cited statistics is the number of shootings in different countries. Moore's numbers have some vague resemblance to many countries' gun homicide rates as returned by crime data, but only if one cherry-picks the lowest crime year available. The American number is derived by ignoring the FBI data (which cites 8,661) and using medical records instead (which are 20% higher) adding the number of incidences of self-defense or police shootings in the line of duty. These same selective considerations do not necessarily apply in the case of other countries' figures. In addition, the USA's population is much greater, and no means of comparison of crime rates - that is, how likely any given person is to encounter such an event - is provided.

Furthermore, Moore cites Canada as a mecca of low crime. Any connection between this and Moore's Canadian funding sources is left as an exercise for the reader. This too, fails. Canada is not a mirror image of America; it has a significantly lower population density. High density correlates strongly with high crime. When one attempts to locate places near the Canada border with similar population density, one discovers that the crime rate is identical, or worse, in Canada than it is in America.

Comparing specific Canadian cities with American equivalents, for instance, we get homicide rate numbers (per 100,000 people) like this: In Canada, we have Toronto (1); Montreal (3); Winnipeg (3); and Windsor (4). In the USA, we get to compare against that with numbers such

as Minneapolis (2.6); Boise (2); Duluth (2); Madison (1.4); Portland Maine (1.2); and Bismarck (0). Please note that three out of the four Canadian cities listed have higher homicide rates than the highest American equivalent. And just imagine, Canada manages to do this with only a third of the gun ownership found in the US.

NRA: Bigots or Angels?

Several times over the course of the film, Moore takes vicious pot-shots at the National Rifle Association. Charlton Heston, their spokesman, is portrayed as a bigot and an incompetent, mean-spirited fool; a ghoul who holds gun rallies after children have been murdered. In a humorous animated sequence, the NRA is implicated with the KKK, where the NRA is supposedly what ex-KKK members turned to when they lost influence and power. In truth, however, the two organizations were pitted against each other from the start.

The NRA was created in 1871 by two Union soldiers and eight of its first 10 presidents were Union veterans of the Civil War. The first president of the NRA was Ambrose E. Burnside, former commander of the Army of the Potomac. In 1871, former Union military hero President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Ku Klux Klan Act and Enforcement Act into law, which criminalized interference in civil rights and allowed Grant to use troops to suppress KKK activity. Grant went on to use the provisions of this law aggressively, making over 5,000 arrests and seriously weakening the KKK's strength in the South. Later on, the NRA would again be linked not to the KKK, but in opposition. During the 50's and 60's, groups of blacks sought guns to resist KKK depredations. They succeeded in their quest by organizing as NRA chapters, which allowed them to acquire surplus military rifles.

Heston himself, portrayed as a racist in Moore's film, helped break the color barrier in Hollywood, and led a wing of marchers in 1963 in Washington with Martin Luther King at the risk of his life.

Running With Editing Scissors

Heston is portrayed giving rude, inflammatory speeches immediately after two shootings: Two weeks after Columbine, and within 24 hours of Flint, MI. The truth, however, is very different.

After Columbine, the NRA respectfully cancelled its events. Its annual meeting,

required by law and planned two years in advance, was chopped down to the business meeting that could not be cancelled legally. At that meeting, Heston gave a speech speaking honestly to the mayor and to the many NRA members already in the area. Moore's quote of Heston's speech begins: "Thank you all for coming and thank you for supporting your organiza-

tion. I also want to applaud your courage in coming here today." The real speech continues, saying: "Of course, you have a right to be here. As you know, we've cancelled the festivities, the fellowship we normally enjoy at our annual gatherings." A few lines later, it continues with "But it's fitting and proper that we should do this. Because NRA members are, above all, Americans. That means that whatever our differences, we are respectful of one another and we stand united, especially in adversity." Moore presses on, quoting "I have a message from [the Mayor of Denver]. He sent me this, and said 'don't come here. We don't want you here.'"

Suddenly, Moore goes wild, chopping apart several bits of the speech in mid-sentence to create an interesting and hateful bit of fiction. He cuts out inconvenient lines such as "well, my reply to the mayor is, I volunteered for the war they wanted me to attend when I was 18

years old.." or "Don't come here. That's offensive. It's also absurd because we live here. There are thousands of NRA members in Denver, and tens upon tens of thousands in the state of Colorado." Certainly the comment, "So, we have the same right as all other citizens to be here. To help shoulder the grief and share our sorrow and to offer our respectful, reas-

the closest election in history.

So what was it that happened "48 hours after?" Apparently, the entire quote, blocked out too fast to be examined normally, was this: "48-hours after Kayla Rolland is pronounced dead, Bill Clinton is on The Today Show telling a sympathetic Katie Couric, 'Maybe this tragic death will help.'" Curious, that's not even on the same topic. Nor does it even mention Heston or the NRA. And sure, it shows talent, but not the kind of talent that has any interest in telling the truth.

The Man Revealed

When pressed to answer to charges of factual inaccuracy in his work, Moore stated, "How can there be inaccuracy in comedy?" In short, Moore considers himself a comedian, and as a comedian, his information can contain any fabrications he wishes. His films are entertaining, perhaps, but it is entertainment that does not expand the mind or inform.

Should the viewers consider Moore to be the paragon of honesty and virtue that many seem to treat him as? His admissions do not reflect any extent of commitment to accuracy and truth. Should Moore

be thought of as an example of moral reporting? Moore's comedy reflects back on the viewer, making them the mirror of his joke. His style of getting the viewer to disdain behaviors which they are immediately inspired to emulate goes over the heads of most of his audience. "Hahaha! Look at those foolish sheep! Baa! Baa!" Funny? Certainly, in its own abstract way - but not a framework to reveal truth or information.

Moore may have comedic skills, and he may be good at creating presentations to jerk the strings of his viewers to his own comedic ends. But he should not be considered a source of reliable information. Anything he says should be cross checked and taken with great caution, built as it is to inspire the very same knee-jerk reactions as it claims to despise. *g*



sured voice to the national discourse that has erupted around this tragedy." was not included in Moore's version.

The entire speech is preceded by a picture of Heston holding up a rifle, saying "From my cold, dead hands!" The careless viewer might believe this a prelude to the 'hateful' speech following, if they failed to notice that Heston's shirt was a different color in that segment.

In another segment, Moore cites a shooting in Flint. He then speaks of how the NRA had another rally in Flint, showing a brief flash of a web page, highlighting and zooming the line, "48 hours after Kayla Rolland was pronounced dead". Viewers think: "Aha! Heston had a rally right after the shooting!" Sorry, no snack for you. Heston in fact came months later to a get out the vote event. Moore was there too, campaigning for Ralph Nader. So were both Bush and Gore. Not related at all, just trying to represent the constituency right before

Book Review: Race to the Top

WRITTEN BY TOMAS LARSSON, REVIEWED BY GEORGE C. LEAF

The inveterate complainers who jump at any opportunity to smash windows to protest globalization are fond of saying that globalization means "a race to the bottom." Supposedly, unfettered worldwide trade and competition are bad because they will drive down wages, living standards, environmental conditions, and so on. Just as Karl Marx tried to frighten people with the prophecy that laissez-faire capitalism would reduce wages to the level of bare subsistence, so do antiglobalists try to frighten people with the prophesy that it will impoverish nearly everyone except a few plutocrats.

Marx was famously wrong, of course, and so are the antiglobalists. Economists have demonstrated why, in theory, the wider the market, the greater will be the benefits of specialization and trade. That argument convinces a few people, but most don't grasp theoretical arguments. Far more persuasive for most people are individual stories where they can readily see the impact that freedom (or its absence) has.

Enter Swedish journalist Tomas Larsson with his book *The Race to the Top*. Larsson has actually lived in a number of the nations that the rock-throwers say they intend to save from the horrors of globalization, and his observations on the actual rather than the imagined effects of foreign investment and trade are simply devastating to the antiglobalist position. Freedom, it turns out, begins not a universal race to the bottom, but instead a race to the top that is especially beneficial for the world's desperately poor. In the course of the book, hand-wringers like John Gray come off looking ridiculous.

Brazil is a country the antiglobalists often point to, claiming that its experience proves that the uncon-

trolled market leads to "economic polarization" manifesting itself in "special enclaves for the rich and stashing the poor in prison." Reality is far different, Larsson shows. Despite an extraordinary degree of governmental interference with free markets-high tariffs protect inefficient state enterprises and a fat public sector drains resources away from workers and entrepreneurs-where economic freedom has seeped in, it has made a tremendous difference. Larsson quotes another journalist intimately familiar with Brazil: "I know people who were literally starving 10 years ago, who now have both fridges and computers."

Thailand is another country supposedly threatened by globalization. Larsson spent years there and understands its situation well. Again, it's a case of capitalism struggling against the clumsy meddling of government. "The country's rulers have been more concerned with building up prestigious heavy industry than with making proper jobs possible for young people," he writes. Trade and investment are stifled by "all manner of taxes and regulations that fend off foreign goods and capital." A high minimum wage keeps low-skilled workers from a chance at improving their lot in life. Critics who cite Thailand as evidence of the harm of globalization have it all wrong, Larsson argues. The anti-market rhetoric is again proven to be shallow and ill-informed.

What about the antiglobalist argument that free trade leads to the "McDonaldization" of foreign countries, supplanting their indigenous (and in the minds of most antiglobalists, morally superior) cultures with American commercialism? Again, Larsson scoffs, having actually observed cultural assimilation. "This is not persuasive," he writes, "especially to



those who have taken the trouble of visiting a foreign land. All the cultural diversity is still there."

The recurring theme of the book is the antagonism between the expanding opportunities globalization brings to people and the efforts of elites to shut down those opportunities to protect their comfortable status quo. One of Larsson's most telling insights is the role of information in economic liberalization. "A free (and professional) press is one of the key institutions that enable individuals and countries to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the global economy-and to avoid its pitfalls," he writes. Unfortunately, "of the five countries receiving the largest net income from multilateral aid organizations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, not one enjoys a free press."

The antiglobalists (and statisticians of all varieties) spin out elaborate, deceptive webs to snare the gullible into believing that freedom is dangerous and undesirable. *The Race to the Top* stands for the opposite idea. "Freedom is good for everybody," Larsson says.

If you won't settle for overheated rhetoric and ignorant rants about globalization, and would like to know the truth, this is a book you will want

George Leaf is book review editor of *Ideas on Liberty*, in which this article was first published

One hundred years of Orwellian thought

A warning that remains relevant. BY JOEY COON

The famous Eric Arthur Blair would have celebrated his 100th birthday this last summer. Although few recognize his given name, Blair was born on June 25, 1903 and adopted his pen name—George Orwell—at the age of 30. He died in 1950 before reaching his 47th birthday. His critiques of government power still ring true today.

Orwell asserted, “At any given moment there is an orthodoxy, a body of ideas which it is assumed that all right-thinking people will accept without question.” In Orwell’s time the prevailing orthodoxy embraced systems of government central planning, most prominently exemplified by Soviet Russia. Orwell examined communism and other totalitarian systems and declared them an abysmal failure by any measure that took personal freedoms into account.

In doing so, Orwell showed rare political and literary courage during a period when criticism of Soviet-style statism was not tolerated by the mainstream. After consulting government officials, a British publisher rejected one of Orwell’s novels; the publisher said the book “might be regarded as something which it was [sic] highly ill-advised to publish at the present time.”

Orwell’s most famous works, and those that generated the most controversy, are the classic novels *Animal Farm* and *1984*. More than 50 years after their first publication, both books accurately illustrate the dangers of expanding government power.

Having witnessed the rise of totalitarian leaders such as Hitler and Stalin, Orwell cultivated contempt for political control and infused his writing with condemnation for government oppression. Orwell artfully used animal characters in *Animal Farm* to depict Stalin’s rise to power and the creation of Soviet communism. The parable illustrates the moral and systemic bankruptcy of

the Russian Revolution. He captures the contradiction inherent in communist ideology with the ruling pigs’ final and only commandment: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

In 1984, Orwell describes a society where the government monitors every aspect of daily life. “Big Brother,” the leader of the ruling party, uses technology to erode privacy rights and keep watch over the general population. Walter Cronkite wrote in the preface to the 1984 edition of 1984, the novel is an “essay on power, how it is acquired and maintained, how those who seek it or seek

to keep it tend to sacrifice anything in its name.” Orwell offered a warning to those who take personal freedom for granted and cautioned that liberty and individualism would not survive in a society where citizens allow government to abuse power.

Orwell considered himself a “democratic socialist” and advocated government intervention in economic affairs. Unfortunately, Orwell failed to recognize that the centralized power he endorsed was also the fundamental flaw of the political ideologies he despised; they differed only in degree, not in kind. Whether Soviet-style communism or “democratic socialism,” attempts to bestow far-reaching power in government hands poses the same

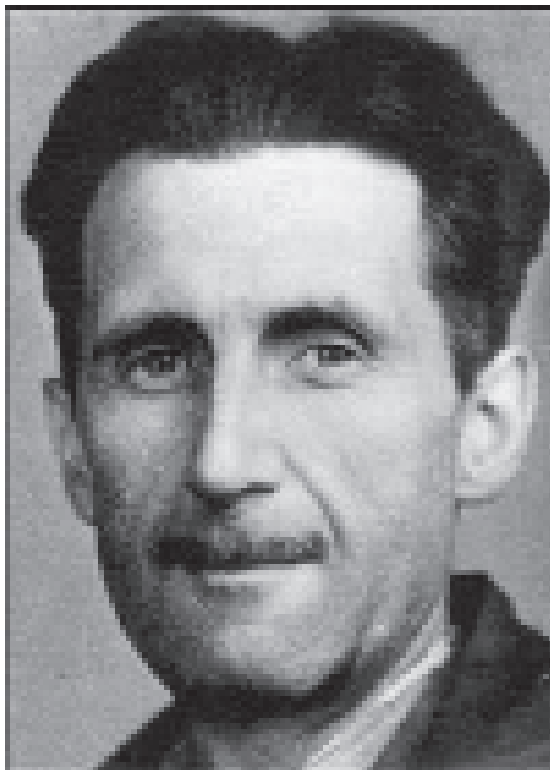
systemic threats.

Despite his own collectivist tendencies, Orwell did recognize the dangers of such politics. In a review of F.A. Hayek’s book *The Road to Serfdom*, which examines the relationship between

individual liberty and government power, Orwell wrote, “collectivism is not inherently democratic, but, on the contrary, gives to a tyrannical minority such powers as the Spanish Inquisition never dreamt of.”

Orwell’s warnings strike a resonant chord in the current political

climate, where we are asked to sacrifice freedom for security and stability. “Big Brother” is a literary metaphor of government encroachment into, and control over, the lives of ordinary people. If we are to avoid an Orwellian society we must reverse the growth of government and its power, and limit the state to its legitimate function of defending personal and economic liberty. g



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Through a Soldier's Eyes *Continued from page 14*

Eastern state. When I confronted Mike with these problems, he gave me a surprising response. I told him that an out-of-control, Islamic fundamentalist government in Iraq would make the entire war a waste of time. Mike disagreed. "I think the whole point of this war was to get Saddam out of there. The Iraqi people aren't going to be one eighth as persecuted as they were under Saddam. He ruled them with an iron fist, he had money but he wouldn't give it to anyone. If they go to a strict Islamic government, it's something I don't agree with. But we should let these people have the right to live how they want. And if it comes to chemical weapons, Saddam was bad with or without weapons of mass destruction. For me, chemical weapons don't decide whether we did the right thing."

As a Marine, Mike is used to difficulty. During his time in Iraq, he had to

wear a heavy, sweat-laden 'chem-bio' suit from Kuwait until Baghdad. He spent most of his days crammed into a vehicle with other soldiers, also wearing smelly 'chem-bio' suits. Often, Mike would have to live on one ration of food a day. The soldiers didn't have bathrooms, and so he had to defecate and urinate into buckets in full view of everyone else. Privacy was unheard of, as were showers, television shows, bacon cheeseburgers, cellphones, and everything else we enjoy as civilians. The only diversion from the heat and monotony was when bullets flew past his head. But to Mike, these were just inconsequential details. Hardship is a part of life. With all the nuisances of being a front-line soldier, he told me, "I enjoyed my time there." Despite the uncertainties, casualties, and economic burdens that the U.S. is now experiencing in Iraq, we have freed the Iraqi people from tyr-

anny. In Michael Baccellieri's America, that's what really counts. *g*

From Prague to China *Continued from page 11*

dead wrong, this exact mentality is corroborated by a number of intelligence reports. While this possibility may be far off, it is dangerously naïve to view China as an ordinary nation. Like Europe they are operating from a completely different paradigm, only it is even farther from our own.

It is even more alarming to note that China's rise in power, as rapid and dangerous as it is, is being built with American capital. The United States has much of the world's investable capital.

Instead of restricting China's access to it, the United States is fueling their growth. With most favored nation status and a giant trade deficit, China's economy will continue to grow. It is a serious mistake to view China as an ordinary nation. The facts about China coupled with their economic growth provide a disturbing image for the future, and all facts suggest that they are anything but ordinary. As China's power grows, the United States will find that many decisions in the world will no longer be its own. Will the

U.S. accept a fate such as Prague's? All of our energy should be directed at ensuring that it never does. *g*

Equality before the law for Boy Scouts and Gays

Freedom of association for all. BY CLINT BOLICK

On June 26th the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the principle of freedom of association when it struck down a Texas law that criminalized private, consensual sexual behavior between homosexuals. At its heart, this is similar to a Supreme Court ruling three years ago that limited New Jersey state's abilities to interfere with the Boy Scouts' private decisions. Both cases should be applauded by all who believe our U.S. Constitution is a charter of liberty.

Although both cases embrace the same constitutional values, many of those who cheered the first decision will revile the second, and vice versa. That one's position on freedom of association depends on one's position on homosexuality demonstrates how ideologically polarized—and divorced from transcendent neutral principles—constitutional debate has become.

Conservatives who agitate for "states' rights" defend the authority of Texas to criminalize homosexual conduct, but support federal judges who ruled against New Jersey when that state sought to prohibit discrimination aimed at gay scoutmasters. Likewise, liberals who champion the right of homosexuals to choose their partners based on sexual orientation would deny Boy Scouts the freedom to choose their leaders on the same basis.

The underlying similarity between the claims is made clear in the Boy Scouts' contention that the New Jersey

anti-discrimination law violated their constitutional right "to enter into and maintain . . . intimate or private relationships." Their words echoed the gay couple's statements in Texas.

The Supreme Court has rarely applied freedom of association in unequivocal terms. In the Boy Scouts case, the court ruled that the New Jersey law, which forbade the exclusion of gay scoutmasters, violated the First Amendment right of "expressive association"

because it would "force the organization to send a message . . . that the Boy Scouts accepts homosexual conduct as a legitimate form of behavior." Still, the court acknowledged the more fundamental principle that "freedom of association . . . plainly presupposes a freedom not to associate."

In the New Jersey case the five most conservative justices, along with conservative groups, backed the Boy Scouts. The four liberal justices just as predictably found New Jersey's state law sufficiently important to override the Boy Scouts' right to expressive association. Their beliefs were backed by liberal and leading gay rights organizations—except one.

Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty, represented by my organization, the Institute for Justice, submitted a brief that deplored the Boy Scouts' discriminatory policies but defended their right to maintain them. The brief argued "[w]hile a creeping infringement of [freedom of association] would harm all Americans, it

would particularly threaten the welfare of gay and lesbian Americans, who have historically suffered when government has not respected citizens' right to gather together free from government harassment."

John Lawrence and Tyron Garner discovered the reality of "government harassment" when Texas police raided their home on other grounds and arrested them for engaging in homosexual conduct. The principle of "expressive association" underlying the Boy Scouts decision provided powerful support for the couple's challenge to the Texas anti-sodomy law.

Interestingly, in the Texas case the sides flip flopped. This time conservative groups wrapped themselves in the government's power to police morally offensive behavior, which they eschewed in the Boy Scouts case. Liberals now opposed a moral judgment brought about by a democratic process, something they supported in the Boy Scouts case. Justices switched sides as well, jettisoning the principles they applied in the Boy Scouts case to reach a result in the Texas case more congenial to their ideological predilections.

The general rule should be that freedom of association prevails and narrow exceptions to that rule can be justified only by the most compelling justifications. But for such a rule to endure, it must be applied universally, not selectively -- to both homosexuals and those who would choose not to associate with them. *g*

Clint Bolick J.D. is vice president of the Institute for Justice. This article was first printed by Cascade Policy Institute



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